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BAUDRILLARD: AFTER THE ORGY

BIOPOLITICS, MASHINES,
NECROPOLITICS

BAUDRILLARD, HYPERREALITY, ORGY, SEDUCTION,
SIMULATION

... If I had to name the present state of things, I would say that every explosive moment in the modern world is a moment of liberation in some area. The liberation of the political and the sexual, the liberation of the productive and destructive forces, the liberation of women and children, the liberation of the unconscious drives, the liberation of art. And the rise of all mysteries and anti-mysteries.

It was an all-encompassing orgy of the material, rational, sexual, critical and anti-critical, an orgy of everything related to growth and growing pains. We have experienced the whole way of production and hidden overproduction of objects, symbols, messages, ideologies, pleasures. Today the game is over – everything is published. And we all ask ourselves the most important question: what do we do now, after the orgy?”

The Transparency of Evil.

Jean Baudrillard

For Baudrillard, the orgy characterizes what he calls the consumer system. Capitalism, at least in its centers, has spiraled from one orgy to the next in recent decades.

Mass consumption is a social system for stabilizing the cultural and social order. It is, and this is important, it is always also a system of production that condemns the useless. The abundance of objects and possibilities of consumption is attached to a magical thinking, Baudrillard thinks. The monstrosity full of colorful shelves does not live from the promise of need satisfaction, but from the “abundance” of signs and the “accumulation of the signs of happiness.”... “It is about the consumed image of consumption. This is the new tribal mythology, the morality of modernity.” And further, “It is not true, then, that needs are the result of production; rather, the system of needs is the product of the system of production.” It is not the products that are the primary goal of the satisfaction of needs, but the prestige acquired with their purchase. The product mutates into an interchangeable sign of desire; more than that, products and desires tend toward a “generalized hysteria.” Consumption promotes a kind of objectless desire, a desire that insists even without the object choice. Thus, consumption is not oriented to use value, but to the production and manipulation of social signifiers, or, to put it another way, consumption is a process of signification and communication, based on a code that inscribes itself constantly and at the same time invisibly into consumption practices.

The category of orgy is important for Baudrillard because the super-production of signs, commodities, events, symbols, ideologies, etc., leads to states of immediate excitement through which there is a release or disinhibition of previously bound energies, or physical and psychological stimulation. The hyper-exciter is, of course, money, or money as capital. Orgy is to be distinguished from the deeper processes of the psyche and from evil in Baudrillard's sense; orgies take place in the world of good, or rather, in the world of various competing products. Baudrillard's notion of “orgy” has many basic manifestations, which makes it a phenomenon with a range and different levels.

Baudrillard's orgy implies the uninterrupted process of publishing and making visible. Baudrillard opposes productivism, which, like a viral contagion, still runs through the writings of the post-structuralists and was not subjected to any critique even by Marx. There is a danger here that theory remains nothing more than a particular elaboration of capitalist principles. Everything is to be produced, everything is to be readable, everything is to become visible and accountable; everything is to be rewritten into relations of forces, systems of concepts, or measurable energy; everything is to be said, accumulated, indexed, and recorded. This is sex as it exists in

pornography, but more generally, this is the enterprise of our entire culture, whose condition is obscene: a culture of productive monstrosity (Baudrillard). Baudrillard's proliferation of signs, semio-sadism (Kroker) eventually leads to the cynical ecstasy of a cool world of operational simulation, because the fatal fate of signs as information has long dominated the energy of the production machine. The circulation of finance is then the new hyper-production or the ecstasy of production. The only thing that returns in this economy of hyper-productivism is inflation. It never disappeared, it only changes its rapidity.

Oleg Maltsev writes: "One of the most important orgies in the world of consumption is connected with "going to work". Work is no longer primarily a productive process; many people work in offices and produce nothing, and the things that are produced in factories are mostly objects for the various classes of orgies. Rather, work today is a kind of controlled social performance. A person goes to work and begins to participate in an orgy. What do people usually want from work? To work as little as possible and earn as much as possible. A kind of harmony: minimum cost – maximum result. But if everyone or almost everyone wanted this, then in theory productivity would be very low; nothing (or almost nothing) would be produced (or whatever else happens in a workplace). For some reason, however, things work out differently. The answer is simple: entrepreneurs start motivating their employees, "playing" to them why they have to work hard until 10:00 p.m. today, because they get a praise, a bonus, an ego or status boost, or avoid a punishment, or a loss of status... Usually, these motives are different for different people.

The producer, who in the course of capitalist history had emancipated himself, at least for certain phases of his life, from his internment in the factory as well as from complete lawlessness in terms of freedom, i.e., who at least had the freedom to offer his labor power to markets, is today increasingly replaced by the employee or the consumer of "labor" who is chained to it day and night. While the potential producer on the labor market embodies a supply as labor power, the consumer of labor represents the embodied demand for the agencies that mediate labor, whereby labor power is permanently designed and traded, coached and cast on the labor markets; it now becomes the flexible mode for the business model of a labor design industry that prescribes permanent casting for labor power. And even if today the producer still spends his labor power, it tends to be stripped from him insofar as he no longer defines himself solely through an act of production, but moreover as a consumer of labor through an act of purchase. And the less nowadays, in view of automation and the excessive increase of bullshit jobs, the necessity of work can still be conveyed to the employees, the more the demand for work is supposed to congeal into a ubiquitous model, which also means that the potential producers are put into the role of consumers of "work" via the job centers and the various private placement services.

Many people who, when it comes to work, seem like lazy people who would never lift a finger in a factory, mine, or field for reasons of productive labor, paradoxically spend long hours and hours in the gym working hard on their own bodies. This seems to be about health, fitness, muscle growth, beauty, etc., but is often a different kind of orgy.

The affectively-occupied, lightning-quick speed one has to cultivate when dealing with digital

devices and media is often expected when dealing with people, objects, and matter, and this attitude, if paid for, is now disguised as employment. Nonstop-doing is hip and hip, even if it is still the very last nonsense that is carried out, at least a little spiritual profit should spring from the occupation, for which the rampant hobby sector from the hardware store to the nudist oasis, the boom of therapeutic wellness and leisure activities with their patchworks of self-enhancing activities and the spiritual well-being industry from tantra to yoga to Thai chi provide the affective templates, although monetary profits from such activities are usually only mediated

The bioenergetic structure of an orgy is a tension-relieving structure, a temporary climax that does not last. Orgies are marketed on the momentary “high” they give. Any orgy, at any level, therefore tends to trigger a psycho-spiritual state of arousal that eventually leads to a “dead end”. At this stage, the person starts looking for another, more intense orgy and pushes the process to the extreme. The orgy is driven by work that is constantly modulated in the cycle of arousal-frustration-excitement, i.e., erection, ejaculation, pleasure, masturbation, control, and destruction.

In pornographic films, for example, pleasure is visualized solely for the purpose of arousing the consumer; it is an optical as well as pragmatic-chemical dispositif that allows the depicted and depicting pleasure machine bodies to slide into the unreal or the a-topical with the help of the technical possibilities of editing, because in the pornographic set pleasure apparently knows no exhaustion and no end, rather it is visualized solely for the purpose of arousing the viewers. Quite in contrast to Sade's orgy, which follows a dramaturgy of destructive transgression (which presupposes what is to be transgressed and thus what is forbidden), in order to demand arousal through the (linguistic) combination of sex, philosophy and crime, and also to increase it up to the goal of the orgy (usually murder and/or incest), although the positions (elementary unit in the orgy) are to be precisely recorded – quite in contrast to this, the gangbang, for example, knows no end. the Gangbang neither with the participants nor with the recipients the idea/practice of the transgression. The gangbang negates even de Sade's most fantastic gymnastic pyramids, with which he makes the orgy calculable, normalizes it, so to speak, and what remains of the orgy in the porn film is the brittle reason of profit, the neutral construction of adding and copulating. For the newcomer to the porn business, participation in a gangbang is a stepping stone up the career ladder. Gangbang parties usually gather a minimum of women to satisfy a maximum of men. Gangbangs add & optimize, increase sex frequency almost on schedule. Still, pleasure machines are always frustration machines.

There are mass orgies based on the same principles of orgy immediate arousal: Soccer, concerts, and elections. These kinds of orgies put the masses in a post-orgasmic and post-fanatic state that always remains totally visible.

Baudrillard is the first thinker of the object, saying that objects develop a life of their own beyond their use value. When Baudrillard turns his focus to objects, he is interested in the universe of signs they establish. These signs transcend all attributions of the subject. In times of consumption, the objects constitute the far greater power.

Stiegler tries to put this into perspective and speaks of a modern capitalist economy of the soul

that is built on commerce and industrial technologies, although we now find ourselves in a hyper-industrial epoch that amounts to an absolute and total (be)calculating and quantifying capital. In libidinous terms, it is a dis-economy that no longer cares at all about its objects. Klossowski had already pointed out in the “Living Coin” that industrial and serial mass production leads to the ephemerality and loss of the object, indeed eliminates any thought of the object’s durability. Thus, objects can no longer provide any support for psychic and collective investments, they are no longer displaceable and infinite, but in their commodity finiteness they are pure quasi-objects, that is, calculable and quantifiable and thus totally void as objects. The objects mutate into non-things. They are nothing, or, to put it differently, today every object is potentially garbage, indeed the object is garbage. (Only the price keeps the object still alive). In this respect, the objects are again something, namely projectiles that destroy the earth.

Surely, with Baudrillard, one must ask what comes after the orgy. Corona was an event which made the orgy run again afterwards – as a simulation of the simulation. But the masses do not ask anything, they do not know once again what the orgy was.

And it is necessary to take into account that the orgy was mainly one of the global North. For the global South, there is another question, that of the creeping mass murder of the surplus population.

translated by deepL.

Foto: Sylvia John

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